GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1661
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2008
FOREST FIRES
Singh Shri Uday

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the forests in the country are fire prone and as per the estimate timber worth Rs. 35 crore is lost to fires every year as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 08.10.08;

(b) if so, the details of facts reported therein;

(c) the details of such incidents occured during the last three years and the current year;

(d) whether the Government has sought help from the foreign experts/agencies to control forest fires; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the other effective steps taken or being taken by the Government to check forest fires in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY)

(a) As per the Forest Survey of India (FSI) study about 53% of India's forest are prone to fire. The FSI has neither done any study to assess damage due to forest fire in monetary terms so far, nor published any such report. The Hindustan Times dated 8.10.2008 has misquoted FSI as a source.

(b) Based on field inventory data of about 25 years, it was analysed that 53% forest area of the country is prone to fire of which 9% is prone to frequent fires and 44% prone to occasional fires.

(c) No annual analysis of area affected by forest fires is carried out by FSI.

(d) No such help has been sought from the foreign experts/agencies to control forest fires.

(e) Does not arise in view of the reply at (d). However, Forest fire management involves prevention, timely detection, control and monitoring. A combination of technologies such as Remote Sensing, Geographic Information System etc. is being used for detection and monitoring of forest fires. Under the Centrally Sponsored − Integrated Forest Protection Scheme, Forest Fire Control and Management is one of the components. Financial assistance is provided to the States/Union Territories on sharing basis to take up various activities for effective prevention and control of forest fires including use of modern technology.